

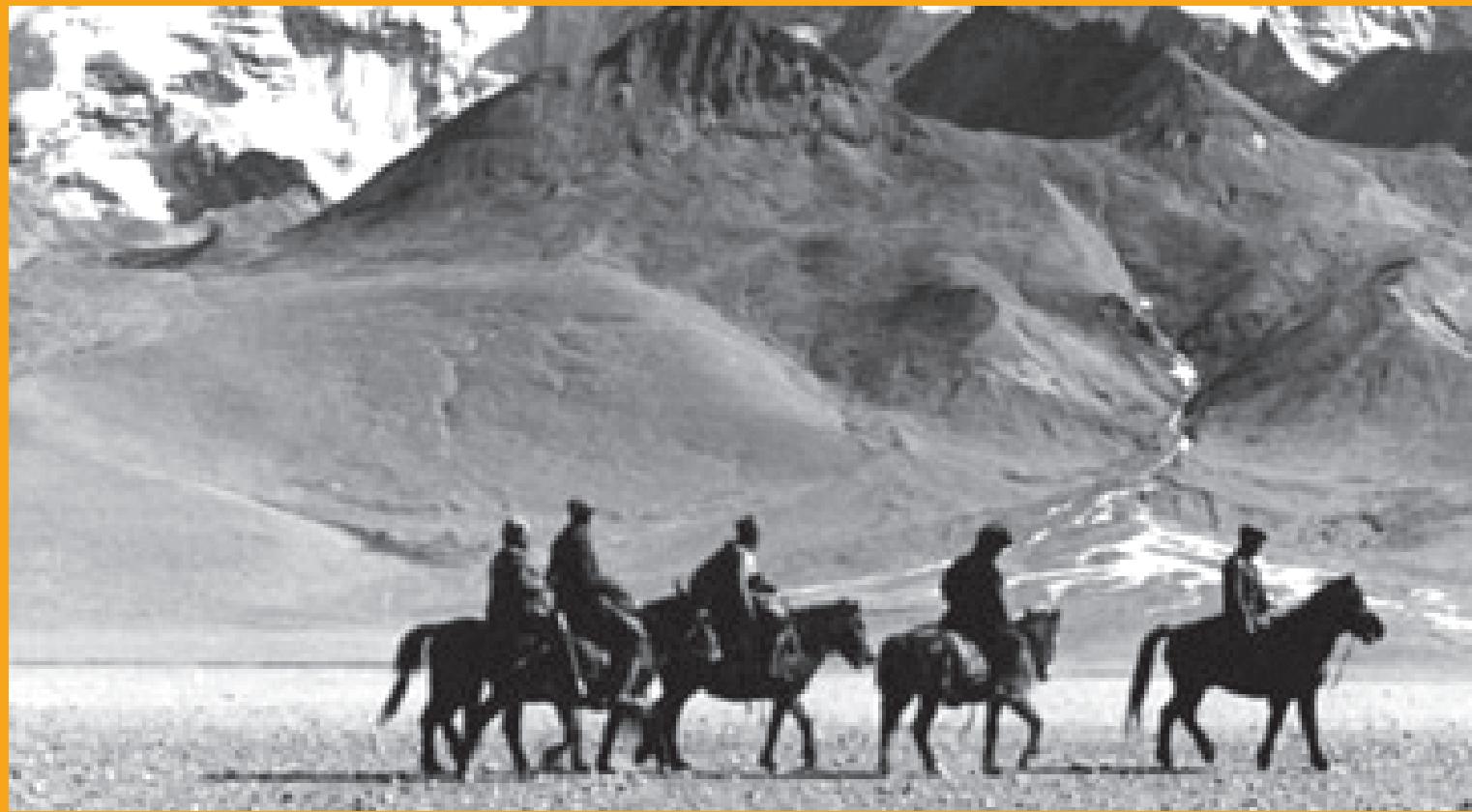


**LIMBU TRIBE  
OF  
KALIMPONG**

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# HIMALAYAN TIMES



**Buddhism, Himalayan  
Trade, and Newar  
Merchants**

HIMALAYAN TIMES

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# HIMALAYAN TIMES

Volume 4 issue 9



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Newar families sent their brother or sons to the major cities—Lhasa, Shigatse, Gyantse—to live for years at a time... These men learned to speak Tibetan, took part in the cultural life centered on Buddhism, and many married Tibetan wives... writes By Professor Todd T. Lewis

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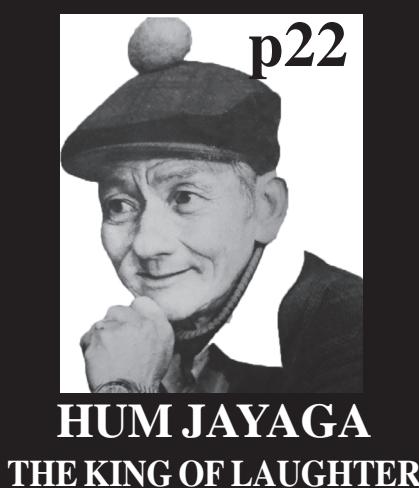
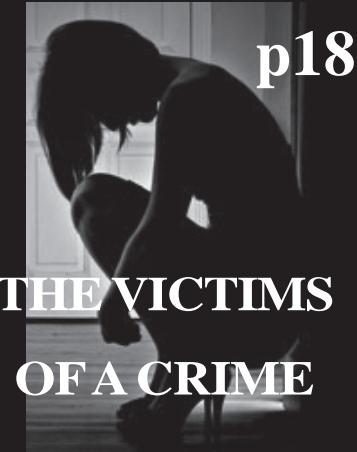
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Sandip C. Jain

## DEFEAT IN VICTORY

**H**istory is proof that the Gorkhas and the Sikhs have fought several of their battles together. Being, arguably, the two most decorated martial races in India, the Sikhs and the Gorkhas have been *Brothers in Arms* in many epic battles both within and outside the country. They have had several many famous victories together- several battles in the First and Second World Wars, the three wars that India fought after Independence as well as the Kargil War. They have served well together. The *Kripa* and the *Khukuri* have together slashed through many defenses.

I wonder if this was a consideration in the GJM leadership offering Mr. S.S. Ahluwalia a ticket from the Darjeeling Parliamentary constituency.. or maybe not.. maybe Mr. Ahluwalia was the only choice offered to the GJM leadership by the BJP high command- a kind of take it or lump it kind of offer. Well whatever it maybe, the fact remains that Mr. Ahluwalia is our Member of Parliament for the next five years, which means the Gorkha-Sikh brotherhood continues. Its another matter that this present honeymoon between the two has a Bengali setting- both being very much a part and parcel of West Bengal. One can only hope that this honeymoon does not have a bitter ending like the one with Jashwant Singh, with Missing Diaries being filed against his continued absence from his constituency.

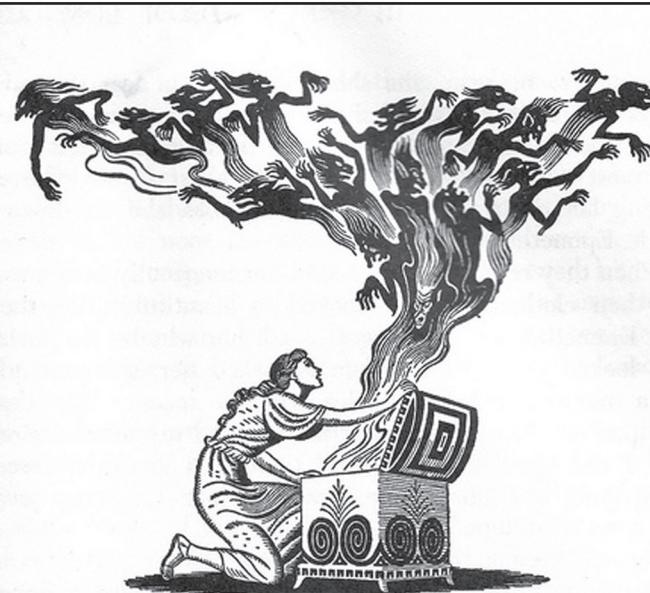
But this article is not about the merits or demerits of Mr. Ahluwalia as our Member of Parliament. I will write about it after another three years- for now this piece is aimed to discuss if the victory of the honourable Sardar actually all due to the efforts of the valiant Gorkhas?? I mean to ask and analyze whether the GJM can rightfully claim to take full credit for the victory of Mr. Ahluwalia, which it appears to be doing at the moment.

Is the victory of Mr. Ahluwalia a victory for the GJM?? Can the GJM claim full credit for the victory?? Is this victory something that the GJM can gloat about?? Should the GJM leadership be happy and satisfied about the results of this election??

My response- definitely not a 100%..

If I was a GJM leader, I would be worried

seeing the results of the just concluded elections. I would look at it as a warning bell. Of course, the GJM supported candidate did win and that too by a considerable margin but then the credit for the victory goes to the votes polled by the BJP ,in the Plains rather than in the Hills. This election results is more of a defeat for the TMC in the Plains of Siliguri than a victory of the GJM in the Hills. This victory has more to do with the Modi wave in the Siliguri, Matigarah-Naxalbari and Phansidewa Assembly segments than a victory of the GJM in the Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Kurseong Assembly segments.



Of the seven Assembly segments that form the Darjeeling Parliamentary Constituency, it was expected before the elections, that the TMC would garner a majority of the vote percentage in the four assembly segments which are in the plains, viz. Siliguri, Matigarah-Naxalbari, Phansidewa and Chopra, while the GJM-BJP would sweep the votes in the three Hills Assembly segments, viz. Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong. It was expected that a tough ballot battle would be fought but ultimately the GJM-BJP candidate would prevail on the sheer might of the votes that its candidate would poll in the Hills of Darjeeling.

The GJM-BJP candidate did win handsomely at the end but it certainly was not due to the earlier expected land slide voting pattern in the Hills in its favour. It was more so due to the better than expected performance of the BJP-GJM candidate in Siliguri- Matigarah-Naxalbari and Phansidewa areas. In the last General elections when Mr. Jashwant Singh was the candidate for the BJP-GJM combine, he had polled 4,11,739 votes from the three Hill sub-divisions as against only 85,910 in the four sub divisions in the Plains. He had won handsomely on the brute strength of the votes that he had received in the Hills. This time round, Mr. Ahluwalia managed to poll only 2,89,017 votes from the Hills while managing to secure a surprisingly high 1,98,847 votes in the Plains. The finer prints show that the BJP-GJM candidate lost a staggering 1,22,722 in the Hills while gaining an impressive 1,12,937 in the Plains. While the gains in the Plains can definitely be attributed to the Modi wave, the loss of support for the GJM in the Hills is what should worry the GJM leadership. Considering the country-wide Modi wave, it can be assumed that there must have been some influence of this wave in the Hills of Darjeeling too. For the sake of making an estimate of the loss of support for the GJM in the Hills, let us assume that 15% of the voters who voted for the BJP-GJM candidates did so because of Modi and not because they were Morcha supporters. It would translate roughly into 45,000 votes, which means in actuality the GJM polled only about 2,45,000 votes. This means from the last elections the GJM has managed to lose the confidence of close to about 1,65,000 people in the Hills of Darjeeling. Percentage wise it translates to 40%.

Now this is something I am sure the think tank in the GJM has looked into although outwardly the GJM leadership is still putting up a brave face. Losing 40% of its supporters within a span of five years for a party which is supposed to be carrying out a revolution does not argue well for it and more importantly for the revolution itself. It is a massive loss of faith and definitely a matter of grave consequences to the dominant party in the Hills of Darjeeling.

What if there was no Modi wave?? What if the people in the four sub divisions of the Plains hadn't supported the BJP-GJM candidate? What if the TMC had managed to corner all the excess votes that were cast in favour of the BJP-GJM candidates in the Plains?? What if the 1,12,937 votes, that Mr. Ahluwalia got over the previous BJP candidate, had been polled in favour of the Congress (I) or the CPM or Dr. Mahindra P. Lama???

The result would have been a TMC victory.. the GJM would have lost in its own game..

I am no Poll Analyst so I may not be too accurate with my numbers but give or take 5%, the GJM did not gather more than 30% of the total votes casts on its own. The BJP-GJM polled about 45% of the total votes cast which was enough to win the elections but I credit the BJP to have secured 15 to 20% votes on its own.

This is a grim reminder of the facts.. The GJM needs to introspect and introspect immediately. A lot is at stake not just for the GJM but more so for the entire Hills of Darjeeling. The issue of the separate state hangs by this slender thread. For the GJM too, their very claim of having the absolute right to represent the voice of the Hills of Darjeeling stands to be questioned.

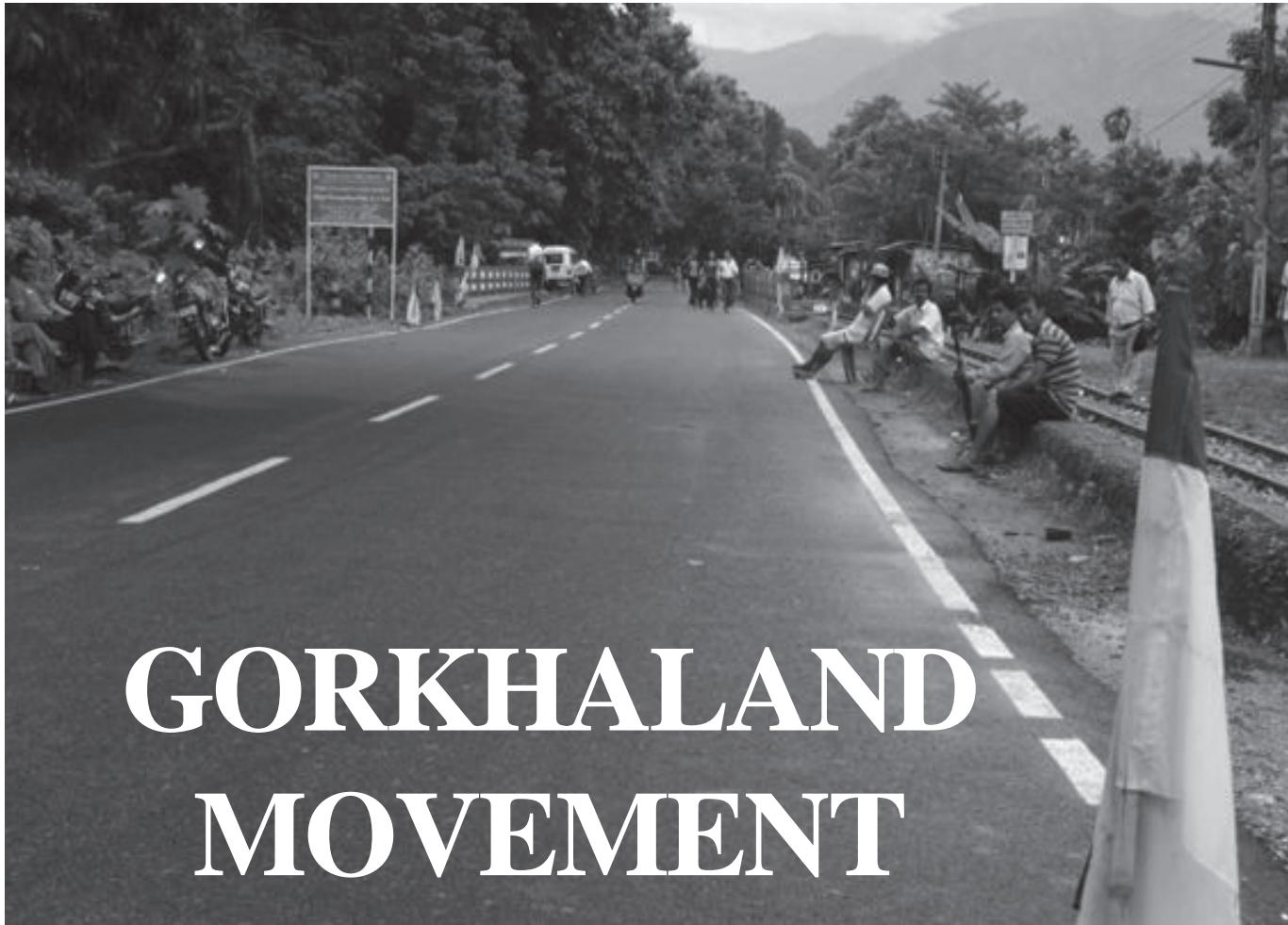
I can only hope that this victory for the BJP-GJM candidate is not actually a defeat for the statehood movement..

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# GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

## Case Study

Extracted from [www.toanewdawn.blogspot.in](http://www.toanewdawn.blogspot.in)



# GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

## HISTORY, FLAWS & PROSPECT

by Vijay Thapa

[This is an extract from a paper presented at the historic international seminar held on nationality question at New Delhi on 16-19 February, 1996 where a number of leftist intellectuals as well as activists from different parts of the country and world participated to discuss about nationality struggles. Although it is a non-current article, we hope this would be very helpful for the concerned readers to get an insight into the Gorkhaland struggle as well as on its history especially the class composition and its dynamics which have led to the present situation in the hills of Darjeeling.]

The year 1816 may be regarded as the turning point in the history of the Gorkha nation. Prior to this unfortunate year, the Nepalese economy was not only self-reliant but had developed in trade, while industrial production had also begun. While Bronze of Bhojpur in Eastern Nepal was famous, the mining of Copper in Charikot had begun; even guns and ammunitions were being manufactured in Puthan in Western Nepal.

While talking about the economic condition of Nepal, Krick Patrick in his book : “An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal” writes that the Nepalese metals like bronze, iron and copper were far more developed than that in neighbouring state of the Indian subcontinent and some of these productions were even competitive with similar productions of Europe. This economic development and self-reliance gave Nepal the courage to develop as an expansionist regime in the Himalayan region. Small states and tribal provinces were being merged militarily into one great nation by Nepal. This left it with battle tested and experienced soldiers ready at hand. Its military might had reached its glory and was on the verge of swallowing almost the entire Northern and Eastern region of the Indian subcontinent. Her boundary extended from the river Sutlej in Kashmir to Teesta in the East and included areas like Gorakhpur, Kangra, Kumaon, Garhwal and part of Sikkim, east of the river Teesta, which include parts of the proposed Gorkhaland area. But this expansionist national character of Nepal terminated along with the war against the well-built power hungry British colonialism.

The Nepalis fought the most heroic battles, formerly unseen by the British in their colonial history. The exemplary courage, skills, loyalty and mass participation in the war against the white enemy has become the most spoken period in the Nepali history. The patriotism in this legendary war is well expressed in the following statement of Nepali Commander Amar Singh Thapa when he stood against the ill-intention of his king to submit before the British in a bid to save his throne: “so long as we are reduced to one man we will continue fighting, either we get victory or be martyrs, our defeat is impossible.” This exemplifies the patriotism and self-respect which remains engraved in the cultural fibre of the Nepalese community and it has always inspired the people in their struggle. Its illustration could

be found in the past Gorkhaland agitation and also in the struggles to come.

While the Britishers were well aware of this spirit and martial quality of the Gorkhas, they were looking forward to use some easy tactics in a bid to cut a profitable deal. This became possible when the internal squabbles in the Palace forced the Nepal king to hastily submit before the British, going against the enthusiasm of his subjects. Thus the most humiliating **Treaty of Sugauli** was signed on December 2, 1816.

This event even today is embedded in the hearts of every Gorkha with both negative and positive events. Positive because the Britishers recognised Nepal as a sovereign state which otherwise in the long run is supposed to have been swallowed in the present Indian Union while on the other hand is negative because the treaty remains a moment of great hardship and embarrassment resulting in the Gorkhas to suffer in subsequent years in alien hands.

The triumph of the British over the Gorkhas cornered Nepal into a landlocked country and made Nepal dependent on the imperialist powers who began penetrating its economy ever since.

The Britishers, impressed by the fighting capabilities, patriotism and loyal nature of the Gorkhas, became desirous to have the services of the Gorkhas in the endeavour to contain and subjugate other provinces in the Indian

subcontinent. Meanwhile, Nepalese agro-economy had begun releasing surplus labourers and the indigenous industries could not compete with British machine made goods. This led to amassing of unused labor force in the economy. Also the need to maintain and run a huge military in view of the neighbouring province coming under one administrative unit under the British seemed wasteful for Nepal. Hence the manpower as part of a military power meant less importance for Nepal.

The Britishers, hungry for more land and Nepalese masses under gross unemployment was a ‘genuine coincidence’ initiating the next move of the Nepali history. Although the Nepal government was reluctant to allow its people to be recruited by the British, the British baiting over salaries and

facilities promised for the recruits encouraged Gorkha masses. The Nepalese fought for their nation in lieu of daily food and ownership of land, they were not paid in cash. Thus by the end of 1815, 4650 Gorkhas had joined the British army. Besides the clandestine measures adopted to attract the gullible Gorkhas such as the permission and help to let them settle in the Northeast India and Darjeeling, the use of gallawalas (agents) to bribe and recruit the Gorkhas succeeded. And when the infamous Rana regime, one of whose cruel prime ministers was termed by Marx as "British watchdog", grabbed power in 1846, a formal clearance to recruit the Gorkhas was received by the British.

Thus population at large amount began leaving there motherland in search of a 'decent life'. By 1908, 10 Gorkha regiments enlisting 55,000 Gorkhas were raised. Gorkhas even joined the Khalsa army of King Ranjit Sin and they were recruited in Lahore. Thus the name 'Lahure' became the synonym for those leaving the country and is in very much use till today. The autocratic and chauvinistic Rana regime began unprecedented brutal oppression on the people of Nepal and turned the country into a bankrupt beggar. This situation became so repressive that the poor population thought the British India comparatively better than their homeland and swarmed to British India and went as far as Burma either as a military recruit or as menial workers. It should also be noted that simultaneously the comprador bourgeoisie patronised and backed by the British imperialism along with skilled labours, clerks, accountants and even domestic servants were pumped into that small kingdom which enabled the British to capture the entire economic control of Nepal. Meanwhile,

viability of tea plantation and commercialisation in 1852 could not be catered by the Gorkhas who have inhabiting Darjeeling and contiguous areas for centuries. This commercial endeavour of the British required labourers of high physical efficiency and endurance for deforestation, plantation and productions i.e. all menial works, but in an extremely low subsistence wage and long working hours. This labour force was coming from Nepal in an unrestricted manner and assumed such proportions that a culture of going 'Muglaan' (foreign) took shape.

Cinchona plantation was also started in 1861 and large-scale production began during 1874-75. The expansion

of this industry, because of its high demand due to perennial malaria epidemic in the subcontinent went on covering new areas deforesting the virgin forest of the Darjeeling hills.

These two agro-based industries employed more than 60% of the working population. Meanwhile agriculture which is mostly done in the Kalimpong subdivision and nearby areas developed after the replacement of the primitive shifting cultivation by modern Nepalese agricultural system. But one should take note that landlordship, in the strict sense of the term, did not develop in agriculture in these areas though disproportion of land was inevitable.

Another major economic sector in Darjeeling is the forest products. Though the Darjeeling forests were "reserved" on May 13, 1865, yet on February 16, 1871 certain forests were declared "open". Jobs like forest maintenance and deforestation employed a large number of workers.

The trading activity which is the oldest preoccupation in the Himalayas increased considerably by 1901 when border trade with Tibet through Pedong, Kalimpong and Sombarey as trade centres was developed. There was considerable trade in wool, musk, gold etc. and these trading activities were gradually monopolised by Marwari, Bihar and Bengali traders. 75% of the trading activity was controlled by these communities while Gorkhas supplied physical labour. The formerly used motor transport system which employed thousand of men in road construction was becoming less efficient to accelerate trading between the hills and the plains. Hence the transportation system was further developed with the establishment of an 80 km railroad from Siliguri to Darjeeling in 1881. This beautiful railway known for its

engineering feat was completed in an astonishingly short period of only three years. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway with its headquarters in Kurseong developed transportation to unassuming proportions. This railway with 13 stations, three small loco sheds and a 6670 sq.mts factory was labour-intensive. Other transports such as rope ways were also developed. Thus by 1920, all infrastructure of a capitalist production system had been developed by the British imperialism. This development was made possible in such a short span of time by the labour of lakhs of toiling people. The population which earlier toiled under land-based feudal economy were now all of sudden engaged in machine run modern capitalist production system. ■

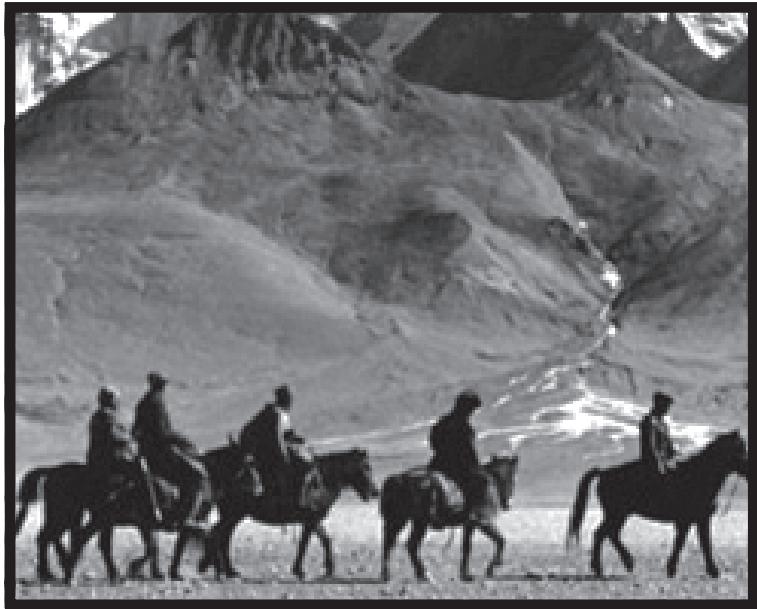
# Cover Story

## Buddhism, Himalayan Trade, and Newar Merchants

### Himalayan Frontier Trade: Newar Diaspora

#### Merchants and Buddhism

By Professor Todd T. Lewis



The civilization with its roots in the Kathmandu valley has for at least 1500 years dominated a territory extending beyond its immediate culture hearth zone. An elevated malaria-free valley roughly twenty mile in diameter, pre-modern Nepal was the most attractive and productive settlement in the region due to its fertile soil, reliable rains, pleasant climate, and trade location. Itself a frontier “satellite” which has absorbed many influences from India and, to a lesser extent, Tibet, the Nepal Valley always retained its political independence for distant empires. The Kathmandu valley’s enduring autonomy and cultural vitality is shown in the survival of a unique Tibeto-Burman language, Newari.

By the Licchavi era (400-800 A.D), it is clear that a core civilization existed in the Kathmandu Valley that was indicated to the extent of rulers making Sanskrit inscription to record local proclamations. Hindu, Buddhist, and even Jain traditions were imported and by the Gupta era “Nepal” was well-known in the Gangetic plains. While we now have basic information about early Nepal’s society and culture from these records, there are only scant references to the limits of Licchavi rule. This early civilization extended to the Banepa Valley immediately to the east and may have reached to Nuwakot. There were likely traders centered in the valley who also established relationships with small settlements on the connecting Indo-Tibetan trade routes several Licchavi inscriptions mention “caravan traders”—but to date no records of these sites have been discovered. Routes through the central Himalayas are mentioned in Sanskrit pilgrimage guide texts of this era and they support the notion that there have been regular avenues of human passage across central Himalayas from the ancient period onward.

In the early Malla period (1100-1480), evidence of Newar expansion emerges, especially for Dolakha. Across the mid-hills, territories were carved up among hundreds of petty-states, with local ruling elites exercising control over subsistence farmers and pastoralists through in-kind taxes, trade tolls, and military coercion. Trade routes to Tibet via Humla, Mustang, Kiyrong, Khasa, and Wallangchung channeled north-south relations. Across the mid-hills, the dominant trade route passed through Jumal to Pokhara, to Nuwakot, to Kathmandu; and from there to Dhulikel, Dolakha, Bhojpur, Ilam, and Darjeeling. Even before the Shahs, the Kathmandu Valley’s metalworkers, artists, weavers, musk/gold/silver traders were linked by middlemen—both Newar and others—to the greater regional economic system that radiated across the hill hinterlands, India, and Tibet.

The eventual conquest of the Nepal Valley by Prithivi Narayan Shah of Gorkha (1769) was a landmark event that altered the course of Himalayan history. Most of the former regional policies shifted in response to the new state: many actions were directed at unifying a single nation: with Kathmandu now at the galactic Center governing a broad territory, this led to unprecedented changes. Setting definitive modern borders and setting up Nepal’s national bureaucracies in law, military, traffic, etc. caused populations across the hills to reorganize, sometimes in new configurations and under new names, and to fundamentally redefine themselves so as to prosper. Analysis of this era in terms of the Nepal state as a dual frontier state underlines the fact of relations shifting across the region,



complicated by the changes in the Tibetan policies northward and with the translation from Mughal to British imperial dominance southward.

### Trade Across the Mid-Montane Region

It was natural that the conquering Shah rulers recruited individuals from the Kathmandu Valley to perform the tasks necessary for national integration., New society was known for its literate elite, successful businessmen, talented artists, and skilled agriculturalists, for the Newars in the Valley, the Shah conquest presented opportunities for exploiting their skills in each of these spheres. Thus, many Newars migrated across the new Nepali empire: some left under contract with the state to supervise government mining, minting, weaving, and other types of production. In the first decades of the Shah rule, Newars were close allies in meting the rulers' ongoing, practical need to supply military garrisons. Merchants also went out to pursue trade opportunities along the administrative networks being created by the new state's organization.

For some Newar entrepreneurs, new economic niches emerged, alliances developed, and settlements grew across the frontier zones. Success fuelled continued Newar migration, coalescing in their dominance in major towns through our mid-mountane Nepal. Migration corridors developed between specific Valley sub-communities and distant satellite towns as all-Newar and non-Newar client-patron relations developed allied with the state's extensions across the hills in all domains but soldiering, and aware of new state laws and procedures, Newars acquired land and created new settlements that partially replicated their core society and its traditions, Entrepreneuring, money-lending, and action as craftsman/ artisan collectives that provided valued household gods, many Newars exploited the possibilities created in the wholly new world of the Shah state. Some became community leaders, including prominent Newar politicians of recent decades; others exploited local people mercilessly; there were still other Newar niches and Newar ethnicity in these sites is complicated yet again by many men intermarrying with non-Newar women.

For many, this migration was permanent and many contemporary descendants no longer retain relations with kin in the Valley. Newar migration continues until the present: the 1981 census shows that roughly forty percent of those who identify themselves as "Newar" live outside the Kathmandu valley proper.

If a bazaar in the Nepalese mid-hills is significant, Newar trading families will likely be there. Throughout Nepal, Newars have been active in pursuing the business opportunities that have unfolded concomitant with economic modernization.

Newars migrating to the mid-montane region transplanted both the Hindu and Buddhist religions caste rituals, architectural styles, distinctive festivals and a host of dialects. Ties with the core area have been preserved in many domains, especially in (individuals of the Sakya and Vajracarya castes), and in pilgrimage choices.

### Newars in Lhasa

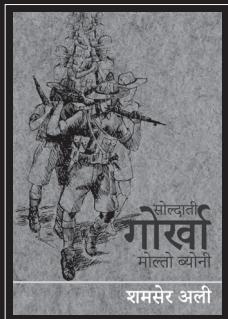
Since antiquity, Valley merchants were well situated to control the flow of Indo-Tibetan trade goods going by caravan in both directions, From the Malla era onward, taxes on trade were a major source of revenue for the Newar kings. One decisive component in the Shah conquest of the Newars was Prithivi Narayan's success at cutting off the flow of trade through Kathmandu, depriving the Malla kings of revenue and undermining the Newar traders' support of their own. After the British Younghusband Expedition opened up the shorter (and therefore superior) trade route to Tibet through Kalimpong, by 1908 Newar traders had lost their advantaged position in the Lhasa trade, though many moved their operation eastward—Darjeeling and Calcutta—to carry on business, they were also involved with minting the money of Tibet, a very lucrative business which dates back to as early as the mid-Sixteenth century and dominated in the introduction of commercial photography.

To trade effectively in Tibet, Newar families sent their brothers or sons to the major cities—Lhasa, Shigatse, Gyantse—to live for years at a time, These men learned to speak Tibetan, took part in the cultural life centered on Buddhism, and many married Tibetan wives. Newars in Tibet were of several kinds: some extended successful family businesses from Kathmandu and prospered dramatically; others attached themselves as salesman, servants to the dominant Newar trading houses, making little more than a modest wage; and still others went to start new businesses that often failed because they lacked the considerable capital and the want of personal contacts required. Newars in Tibet did cohere as a group, creating guthis to celebrate their own festivals and organized themselves in dealing with Tibetan officials....

#### **Trans-regional Networks and local History**

The logic of the trans-Himalayan Buddhist trade network affected the evolution of both Nepalese and Tibetan civilization Newars for at least 1000 years were highly-sought artisans across Tibet and in more recent times lamas were called to Kathmandu to supervise major renovations of the Swayambhu and Buaddha stupas. This trade/art connection represents an ancient trans-regional pattern: a recent study of Chinese and Kushan merchants had demonstrated that the spread of Buddhist tradition itself motivated frontier trade. The material culture of Buddhist decoration and devotion—silks, gems, metalwork amulets—itself became a commodity, as monks and merchants crossed the lands synergistically while cultivating respectively, converts and new markets. The alliances and wealth generated affected the entire network region.

In many domains, Newar Lhasa traders have had a strong effect on their own core tradition. Once lamas with whom they were acquainted arrived in the Kathmandu Valley, the traders made donation to maintain them, sponsored rituals, and built monasteries to insure their local institutional presence. But the tie with Tibet was more important than merely transplanting lamas and highland monasteries: the often great mercantile profits returned to contributed to Kathmandu's economy, primarily through religious patronage. We know that in this century Lhasa traders restored and made additions to all major indigenous Buddhist shrines throughout Kathmandu city: the directional Buddhas at Svayambhu , si Gha: Vihara, the Bijesvari complex, Jana Bhaha, and the Annapurna temple in Asan, In addition, they sponsored the majority of extraordinary patronage events to the Newar sangha in this century. Thus, we cannot fully understand Buddhist history in the Himalayan region or in the Kathmandu Valley without taking into account the trans-regional relationships that diaspora Newar merchants sustained across the Indo-Tibetan Himalayan frontier. ■



# Soldati Gorkha Molto Buone

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## CHANGING ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF LIMBU TRIBE OF KALIMPONG

### “I DON’T KNOW MY MONTHLY INCOME”

I still remember the day I first visited Dungra Bustee in order to understand one of the dominant tribe Limbus of Kalimpong subdivision. But my research generated more questions than it answers. Question about the change in social and political perspectives, question in regards to the obvious changes those were observed in resource management, conservation patterns and a big question about the process of decision-making and policy.

The post-independence era evidenced a large number of development policies and programmes focused on the development of the tribal areas. In spite of all efforts, different tribal groups are living in different stages of socio-economic standards. As the country still falls short of providing for all its citizens, northern most region of West Bengal where Kalimpong is located is even further marginalised. After Indo-China border trades resumed, Kalimpong loses its economic prosperity like past. The location of Kalimpong is sandwiched between the neighbouring countries of Nepal, Bhutan and the state of

Sikkim. The increase in commerce attracted a large numbers of migrants from Nepal, leading to an increase in population and economic prosperity in the past. But in modern Limbu village like Dungra Bustee, Tanek Bustee, Bong Bustee, Pudung Bustee of Kalimpong Block-I, II and III of Darjeelind District the 9303 Limbus (as per Yakthoong Shong Choomvo) are fighting and losing battle for their survival mainly due to increasing anthropogenic activities of habitat destruction and environmental degradation. Ironically this indigenous tribe ‘Limbus’ of Kalimpong are confronting a market-driven processes accentuated the unequal high land, low land economic links generally unfavourable to mountain regions.

**In modern Limbu village like Dungra Bustee, Tanek Bustee, Bong Bustee, Pudung Bustee of Kalimpong Block-I, II and III of Darjeelind District the 9303 Limbus (as per Yakthoong Shong Choomvo) are fighting and losing battle for their survival mainly due to increasing anthropogenic activities of habitat destruction and environmental degradation.**

Traditionally Limbus are reasonably knowledgeable about the management of land, forest and water but unfortunately at least from the latter half of the nineteenth century, their knowledge related to this age-old agricultural practice began to wear away with the decline of shifting cultivation. Though Limbus are predominantly settled in the rural areas of middle hills where vegetation is pre-dominantly tropical but the crop yield in Limbu habitat is very poor. The agricultural

land provides fewer opportunities for cash income and sufficient food for the whole year, still the source of main income for the household in rural areas is their own agricultural land and farms. Expensive transport, high cultivation cost, ignorance about marketability of cash-crop drags them towards fragile economic condition. Because marketing crops is an opportunity hardly obtainable to most Limbus in these areas. Kalimpong, a major ginger growing area of India also produces eighty percent of India's production of orchids that are exported all over the world. But ironically 9303 Limbu population among Kalimpong's total population of 42988, Limbus are rarely ever occupying any part of this contribution of ginger and orchid production. In local market most of the shops are owned by the Bhutia, Rais, Tibetans and other dominating castes of kalimpong. Only three Limbu vegetable shops have been found in the nearest Raja Dorjee or Parasmani market in Kalimpong. While asking about their survival it is observed in rural areas of Kalimpong that most of the Limbu families are unaware about their monthly income.

As such no big industry has been developed in this area of Darjeeling district. Only few small – scale industries have been run by the majority Nepalese which is indicated by the fact that Limbus present occupation is terrace cultivation and they also work as daily labourers in agricultural fields. A sizeable number of Limbu youths are enlisted in Indian Gorkha regiments. At present it is observed that some of them are engaged in various white collar jobs like teaching at schools and government and private sectors.

As I observed "a botanical paradise" like Kalimpong is facing the biggest environmental problem. A lack of waste management, soil pollution by using pesticides, disposal of plastics is causing a loss of bio-diversity. Not only the Limbus but also the other communities here have failed to protect their forests. As a result of this deforestation, the streams and wells become dry and an enduring problem of water scarcity causes harm for their regular cultivation. The tendency of Limbus towards decreasing the dependence on forest and its income is growing. A recent report of the year 2013 of West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Limited shows that, "Kalimpong Division used to be the highest revenue-earning division of the WBFCL in the past. But due to highly volatile political climate of the Darjeeling hills, it has become difficult and uneconomic to manage Kalimpong Division." It is an inevitable reality that Limbu perception of the physical environment is intermixed with their social and spiritual



**Modern forces of changes are widening the Limbu youth rapidly. Observing the present scenario of Kalimpong it can be said insufficient employment opportunities drag them towards poverty, but Limbu's present scenario of education seems better than the past.**

worlds, which is a very important factor of mountain development strategies but unfortunately bypassed by the implementing agencies. We should not forget that "development is an active policy which refers to mature economy and self-sustaining growth and the related action pattern, will no doubt generate an increased productivity which in course of time will improve the quality of life, namely elevating the people from poverty to prosperity and opening up more leisure time by which their creative and philosophy can be checked and ignorance can be removed, if the group is allowed to have a privileged life style (Bhowmick, P.K. (1993). *Dynamics of Tribal Development*, Inter India Publications, New Delhi.)

Modern forces of changes are widening the Limbu youth rapidly. Observing the present scenario of Kalimpong it can be said insufficient employment opportunities drag them towards poverty, but Limbu's present scenario of education seems better than the past. At present, graduate and post-graduates are found in every village .But most of the educated youth does not have any planning about their future employment. Some of them are engaged in various white collar jobs like teaching at schools, public and private sectors and government sectors. Getting no

opportunity of employment the young generations are involving themselves in daily labourer jobs in roads and constructions.

To nature economy and self-sustaining growth the Tibeto-Mongoloid tribe Limbu need to be more conscious about their economic advancement through traditional practices. In addition, the community can play an important role in creating awareness about statutory laws, policies, and projects among their people. Active community participation in policy and decision-making processes should be solicited. In this way Government can promote horticulture and small-scale industry in the region, which will provide job opportunities to the local people. An opportunity for income-generating activities based on customary practices needs to be created. Their livelihood options should be addressed along with conservation measures. Otherwise in the future most of the Limbu family-head of not only in remote areas but even in urban Kalimpong will say as they usually say now, "I don't know my monthly income".



OPINION

PETER  
KARTHAK

My thesis is that four diverse people - Marwaris, Bhotes, Lepchas and Nepalis - built modern Kalimpong. The Marwaris had Agarwals, Banthias, Jains etc. The Bhotes had Hisheys, Bashis, Namgyals and others. The Nepalis had Gurungs, Bahuns, Subbas, Tamangs, Pradhans and many others. The native Lepchas were Rongongs, Karthaks, Simiks, Sitlings and others. Many Lepchas had left for Kathmandu to spread "extreme Protestantism" and they are still active in Nepal. If Kalimpong had the Scottish Dr. Graham's Homes for illegitimate Anglo-Indian 'dingo' orphans, it also had the Nepali Kumudini Homes School. Kalimpong is as much Damber Singh Gurung's country as well as Ram Krishna Sharma's. Gurung was a political liberation fighter for Nepali rights, representation, awareness and development

while Sharma was a Calcutta High Court Judge and a Nepali literary original. But Nepali Kalimpong is largely the lot of Newars, a la the Pradhans headed by Paras Mani Pradhan and his many progeny birthed by his fecund wife. It is the same Paras who forms one third of the trio of "Su-Dha-Pa" - Surya Bikram Gyawali, Dharanidhar Koirala and Paras Mani Pradhan - who spread Nepali enlightenment and awareness all over the Indian northeast. But this

## KALIMPONG- DOWN MEMORY LANE



propaganda has some big holes and must be straightened in this story. It was obvious as far back as 1964/65, the time of this story, that Paras Mani had the Churchillian notion of "I'm a great man!" He was the fountainhead of his large family and his dynasty's tentacles were already all over Darjeeling, including the plains of Siliguri. Paras compiled Anglo-Nepali dictionaries, wrote text books and grammars, composed awareness verses, wrote articles, spoke at felicitations, inaugurated events, worked as a school inspector, edited magazines, ran his printing presses, involved himself and his family in lucrative businesses and other pioneering activities, owned vast tracts of land. He was a true shining "paras" and "mani" in the Nepali diaspora of Darjeeling and the northeast. Therefore, he deservedly nourished his ego. The following fable may prove this: Paras red-handedly caught a bunch of students raiding his

orchard of guavas and oranges. He stopped the scurrying kids and asked them where they studied and what textbooks they read. They were class six and seven students, and among the books, they cited one Nepali grammar called Madhya Chandrika. "Who's the author of the book?" Paras growled at the miscreants. "It's Paras Mani Pradhan." They sang in unison. "Well, I'm that Paras Mani Pradhan! There's a picture of me in the book too. Do you know that?" "Yes, yes. Now we know. Namaste Sir! Namaste Baje!" The

kids were jubilant in their discovery; their shaking legs steady now. "Namaste, Namaste! Now since you know who I am, you can have all my guavas and oranges. Go on!" This was the same Hindu Paras Mani "Pradhan" who discovered his Shakya lineage at a Buddhist Bahal in Patan. He scooped a handful of soil from his ancestral place with wet eyes and quivering lips. It was the same Paras who exhorted Tribhuvan University's NDS graduates to "go back to the villages" and embrace agriculture. It was the same Paras who told the Newars of Kathmandu to look to Panauti for purity in Newar language, traditions and their way of life. But who the hell were Surya Bikram Gyawali and Dharanidhar Koirala, the two legs in the Su-Dha-Pa tripod? They were a couple of Kathmandu Bahuns who deserted Nepal during the Ranarchy and worked in Darjeeling to arouse its Nepalis to self-realisation and redemption through language, literacy and other movements.

They also were appointed to the headmastership of the government school in Darjeeling and led comfortable and sheltered lives. Surya Bikram spent his years chewing betel nuts while Dharanidhar sent regular dossiers on Nepali exiles and students to the Ranas of Nepal because he was their spy in Darjeeling. They were exiled teachers from Nepal pontificating in already literate and vigilant Darjeeling. But why did they leave illiterate and backward Kathmandu where they could do much for its own Durbar, Juddhodaya and Padmodaya schools that were largely left in the hands of despotic Bangali Mastars? History is rather mute here. And when Nepal's political climate changed to their favoured liking, Surya and Dharanidhar opportunistically returned to Kathmandu. While Surya rose up to the Vice Chancellorship of the Royal Nepal Academy, Dharanidhar enjoyed his pension from the Education Board for doing nothing for the education sector of Nepal. Only Paras Mani was the real gem of the triumvirate of Darjeeling because his whole lot was here: He was born here, had to live and work here and die here while Surya and Dharanidhar had the good fortune to be

**If Kalimpong had the Scottish Dr. Graham's Homes for illegitimate Anglo-Indian 'dingo' orphans, it also had the Nepali Kumudini Homes School. Kalimpong is as much Damber Singh Gurung's country as well as Ram Krishna Sharma's. Gurung was a political liberation fighter for Nepali rights, representation, awareness and development while Sharma was a Calcutta High Court Judge and a Nepali literary original. But Nepali Kalimpong is largely the lot of Newars, a la the Pradhans headed by Paras Mani Pradhan and his many progeny birthed by his fecund wife.**

turncoats and come back to Nepal. So much for the propaganda on Su-Dha-Pa! Mr. Amber Gurung and The Hillians had their last joint programme in Kalimpong. It was then the nobility and gentry of the town knew of the presence of The Hillians. "You must play for our charity ball," they said, and arranged to have the town hall ready for the evening party. I did not know Kalimpong had a public hall. The three previous performances of The Hillians in the past took place in restaurants and every party ended in fights between the town's drunks and the sophisticated. But this time it was different. The party was arranged by Karma Hishey, the Bashi brothers, Dhondup, Britto, Chinlen, Kesang and her friends - all in all, North Pointers and Loreto girls. It was to be an exclusive "Missies" and "Babas" party and The Hillians had to be a western band. Another point was we were not to be paid our fees. Our gratis performance had to be in the true North Point spirit of "Sursum Corda", and the charity would go to some social organisation in Kalimpong. So be it, we said and played for the huge crowd until past midnight. No fights

ensued, and everything was civilised and hunky dory. The organisers did not even reimburse the transportation expenses we incurred for hauling our equipment from the school and our hotel. But we were thanked profusely. Our stay in Kalimpong ended thus. We bade our farewell to Mr. Gurung. It was our pleasure and privilege making music with him after such a long time, and we would miss him terribly. Later I learnt that Mr. Gurung toured the Dooars tea estates. I heard that Samdhup Daju arranged the long itinerary. But this almost ended in loss of lives and limbs, and is a separate story. Then I learnt that Mr. Gurung had started teaching piano and music at Dr. Graham's Homes and other Cambridge schools. When we crossed the Teesta Bridge and climbed steeply up the Peshok Tea Estate, I realised that I did not meet any of my relatives and friends in Kalimpong. I did not once visit them in the Mission Line, or the Tirpai hills or in the Bazaar areas. And it turned out, in retrospect, that I had said a long goodbye to Kalimpong.

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# WAR DRUMS FOR SHERJUNG THAPA

- Submitted by K. Guliyo

The Second World War did not spare the Darjeeling hills.

On 02 September 1939, in Ghoom near Darjeeling town, an athletic 19 year old boy lined up with other aspiring youths to be recruited as a soldier in the British Army. He had walked 38 miles from Sindepung Busty, Kalimpong. His father had a large homestead, but times were hard. Sheer grit, thrift and love shown by his mother helped him pass the stiff Matric examination of Class 10 from SUMI School. Going to school meant a daily walk of nine miles. But he had done it. He was the first one to pass this board examination from the region.

He kept hidden three vital truths. He had run away from home. His class ten Matric certificate made him over qualified for a Gorkha soldier. He did not reveal his religion. Thus, as he stood in the recruiting line he took upon himself the name and mantle of Sherjung Thapa.

Standing 5 feet 8 inches tall, with a sharp mind, a lithe body and a natural gift for sports, he was easily selected. Because of the escalating second world war, these new recruits were bundled out of Darjeeling the very next day to a training camp in Lucknow, in erstwhile United Province.

Nine months later Sherjung completed training in first grade. Soon after, as their ship left Kidderpore dock in Calcutta the hilarious hill boys danced on the deck, singing a popular, martial folk song “lahurey ko reli mai...”. The ship passed the notorious kaala paani (black water) surrounding Andaman Nicobar Islands, and finally harboured at Rangoon, Burma.

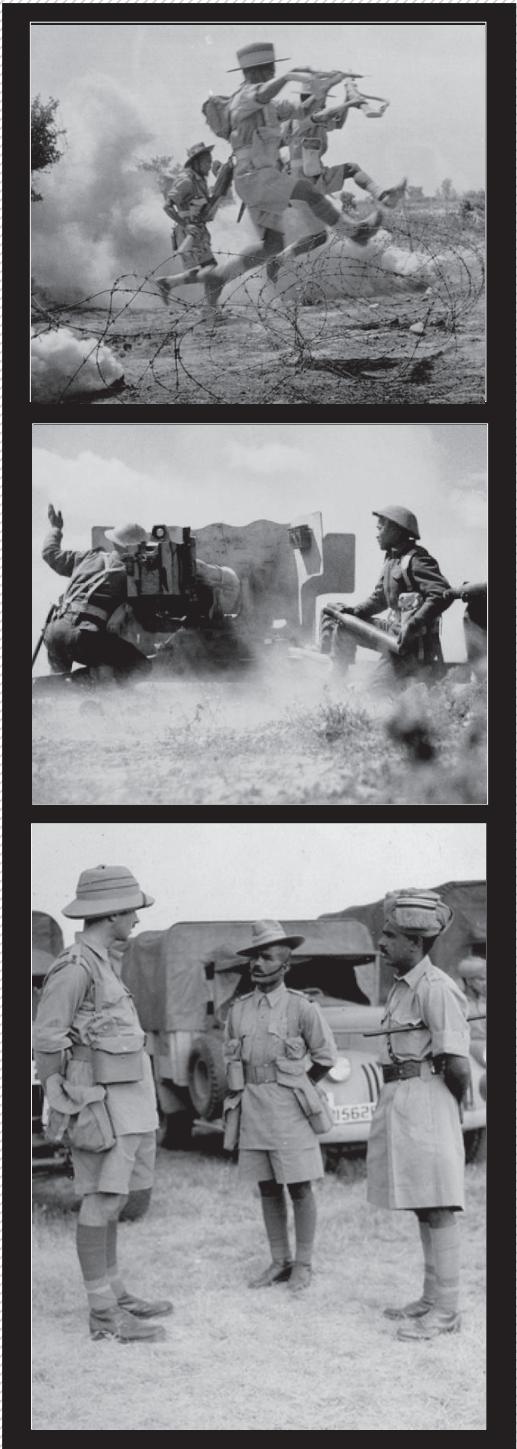
Rangoon was being pounded by the Japanese air force. Mandalay, situated more north, was being mauled. Overnight Sherjung’s group of Gorkha soldiers was taken to a camp outside Mandalay. The Gorkhas were given the daunting task to defend Mandalay.

The British officers noticed Sherjung’s knowledge of English. He was assigned to take part in a secret mission which involved transport of hardware from Mandalay to Kachin. A factory had been set up there to assemble aircraft. The whole factory was camouflaged amidst dense jungle greenery. Aircraft engines made in Plymouth in England were taken there at night. Planes fitted with machinegun, napalm, and incendiary bombs used to make sorties at dawn against the Japanese infantry. Sherjung’s work so impressed the British, that in a small ceremony in the jungle the King George Medal was bestowed on him. Two chevrons were also pasted on his arms making him a corporal.

The Burmese people looked like Gorkhas. Pretty Burmese girls fed the Gorkha boys rice mixed with local brew served in banana leaves, along with fish steamed inside bamboos. Strict British discipline could not keep the passions of the youths in check. Sherjung and his friends made nocturnal jaunts into the villages. For these prohibited gallivanting the two chevrons of Corporal Sherjung were taken out, and after good work, again put back a number of times. He was even caged for 28 days and was forced to hear beautiful village ballads sung from an adjacent cage by Lalbir Tamang of Nepal.

In one Chinese village just outside the factory, he ate a mouse from inside a baked mud shell, without much retching. Ever the gallant hero he could not say no to Seth Phin a charming Chinese girl who presented this delicacy.

The Japanese advanced into Burma. Hundreds of Gorkha and British soldiers died in air attacks in the camps around Mandalay. The British army was crumbling against the Japanese behemoth. Many white soldiers started sneaking away from battle, and made their way to the river Irrawaddy. More than half of the Gorkha jawans were slaughtered. The



remaining still fought on. One of them was Chhatramaan Gurung. In one close combat where his khukuri was used he retrieved a Japanese flag. This flag, placed beside a coveted Military Cross still adorns Chhatramaan's house in Kaagey Busty, Kalimpong.

Sherjung's unit was ordered to retreat. Before that, arms, ammunition and petrol in the camp were to be destroyed. Four friends from the unit, made their way towards the river Irrawaddy. One air attack instantly killed Dhanmaan and Birbahadur. In a dazed state Sherjung and Gambirdhoj dragged the blood-covered corpses of their friends and floated them away in the Irrawaddy river. To cross the river the two made a raft of bamboos tied with vines. After nearly capsizing, the friends ultimately made it across. Gambirdhoj was having high fever and he lay out on the beach. Leaving his friend beside the river, Sherjung lumbered towards the direction of the setting sun. Inside the dense jungle he had to create a path to walk. There were rotting carcasses of mules, and horses. The smelly human dead bodies were mostly of British soldiers, interspersed with Gorkha corpses.

Weakened by hunger Sherjung was finding his rifle too heavy to carry. On seeing a bird Sherjung took careful aim and fired. The bird came fluttering down. As he scrambled to retrieve the prey one white officer emerged from the bushes and held out his open palm. Only hunger and survival mattered in this primeval setting. Sherjung clawed away the feathers of the bird and gorged on the raw meat. He did not share it. The next morning the white man's kneeling corpse lined one of the paths. Sherjung could never forget the eyes of the officer begging for a morsel to eat.

Sherjung reached a stream where corpses were half floating. Survivors of bombs were being killed by cholera. He could not care less. He dipped his face and mouth in the dirty water and swallowed huge gulps of the foul liquid. He then laid himself beside the stream.

On opening his eyes he found himself in a washerman's house. He bartered rice and dal in exchange for his medal, two "Company" (East India Company) rupees and his wristwatch. After gaining strength he deposited his rifle in a dilapidated depot and continued on with his journey.

His sole focus was – home, sweet home. Visions of steaming fragrant rice in his village, with black dal and green sprouts, spurred him on as he chewed on queer-tasting leaves and weeds. The sounds of bombs and firing slowly faded in the distance. After 35 days, he sighted smoke from a train in Dimapur, in erstwhile undivided Assam. He somehow managed to board a railway wagon. He finally landed in Siliguri station in Bengal.

A young man working for an oil company stopped when he saw a walking skeleton in tattered army uniform emerge from the railway station in Siliguri. B B Dixit was shocked on recognising this living ghost as his classmate from school. He took Sherjung to his nearby quarters. After a glorious bath, and food, actual food, he put his friend inside one of his old suits, and into a vehicle going to Kalimpong.

A size zero Sherjung half hidden in an over sized suit reached his village in Sinddepung Busty, Kalimpong on 10 April 1942. It was nearly two and a half years since he had left this abode of love. Sherjung's mother screamed appuueee with sheer joy. Despite all the tears, and anguish she had never ever given up on her eldest, pet son.

Food, care and love worked a miracle. Six months later Sherjung was a popular footballer, delighting the roaring crowds at the Mela ground with his skilful swerves.

Many of his friends had not returned from war. There was no documentation of their deaths, nor any hint of their last whereabouts. Sherjung's heart broke whenever loved ones asked him about a lost soldier. How could he tell them about the bloody reality of Burma ? How could he tell the married, waiting, and aging women that it was time to wipe their sindoor (red colour in hair worn by married ladies) and accept themselves as widows ?

The images of war were still vivid in his mind, when again, Sherjung was taken up in the pervasive enthusiasm of his friends applying for recruitment as Pilot Officers in the Royal Indian Air Force. Three educated youths applied from Kalimpong. After rigorous tests, only two were selected from the whole of Bengal. Sherjung and a Bengali Brahmin from Calcutta were directed to report immediately at Poona for training as Pilots.

This time there was no need to hide anything. He thus wrote out his real Muslim name:

Rustom Ali, Royal Indian Air Force, Ind No 12591, 31st Pilot Course, At Poona, Selected from No. 3,G.H.C. Calcutta

On 29 June 1944, nearly two years after his return from Burma, the young man again left his village to join the War for a second time. This time his father and mother blessed him. His girlfriend Celina Sitling came to see him off at Geil, the nearest railway station from Kalimpong. She waved at the small train taking her beloved towards the sound of distant war drums.

In the pain of separation and uncertainty she hugged hope. ■

# opinion



## THE VICTIMS OF A CRIME

month) how many cases are likely to be filed in a year? Or how many cases are filed/unfiled within a month in larger cities? And how would the calculation with its conclusion go in the entire country? The acts, laws and sections of Indian Penal Code embrace as a vague void before the criminal's activity forgetting their relationship and social status.

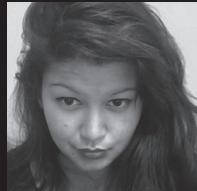
Section 375 of IPC defines rape as "sexual intercourse with a woman against her will, without her consent, by coercion, misrepresentation or fraud or at a time when she has been intoxicated or duped, or is of unsound mental health and in any case if she is under 16 years of age."

Section 376 defines the punishment for rape. "If rape is proved then punishment can be up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment for raping an adult and up to ten years for raping a minor."

There are various unshared stories of groping, molestation or rape which shouldn't be overlooked, we could take precautions and save a girl or at least make her aware of such unexpected situations and provide her with the insight of avoiding hysterical episodes from the resembling read scenarios.

"I know this because I was once a Common Indian Child.

I was 12, on my first trip to India without my parents. A group of cousins and I were dutifully visiting some elders—summers in India are scorching, so I broke away from the group and went to the kitchen for a bottle of water. I crossed the living room, and there he was, lying on a bench swing, gently swaying, reading a newspaper. He saw me, pushed his reading glasses up on his head and his face lit up. He said my name, held out his hand.



Nisha Chettri

Violating the law or the social taboo of the society was never the norm ten years ago but now people drift away beyond their threshold of dignity and exasperatingly make girls their mode of adequate compensation or sexual gratification. Trafficking, molestation, groping the private parts, gang-rape, rape and child sexual abuse can occur anywhere, anytime like it is inevitable and can't escape from it. Sexual offences against women and children are often committed in the name of marriage, employment and in situation like trafficking etc., which not only leads to a criminal case of the episodic insanity but also the neurological damage of the victim. Stress caused by sexual abuse can also cause a notable changes in the brain functioning and development of an abused child. Day by day India is getting known for a nation of child sex abusers and it is true as we read the news of such issues in the newspapers and internets regularly.

Rapes are multiplying every month, the (sexual) urges seem irresistible in men and eventually grabs a premature genitals forcefully with their wrath for their satisfaction. The sociological environment is invaded with rapists, the versed anthropologists failed and the constitution along with the legislative assembly is found deficient when it comes to stopping or at least decreasing rapes (in India). If a tiny hamlet like Kalimpong witnesses 7-8 filed juvenile rape cases in a month, (which keeps increasing in every coming

Thinking he wanted a handshake, I put my hand in his.

He said something then, something like how it was good to see me after so long, and how my parents were? He tugged my hand across his body until I was splayed on his chest. I remember thinking, is he trying to hug me? I started to answer. His hand cupped my breast through my thin kameez, his finger stroked over my nipple.

I froze. I'd been drilled to obey my elders, but this was wrong, wrong, wrong, and I knew it. I should have screamed bloody murder. I should have roused the whole family. I should have made a scene. Instead I made small talk for a while until the conversation faded and I could escape." Writes Mohi Kumar (India's man problem)

Molestation and rape bangs the sound of silence in despair. Voicing about their explored body is a step or a purpose of forsaking oneself from the society. Why would the victims make themselves the talk of the town? Isn't it? That's how the abused one stays without raising their voice, with the fear that they might be listed as 'untouchables' and branded as the victim of a crime. The peculiarity merges from within-within the society, rapists belong to the same society whereas the people who don't accept the victims belong to the same. And people like us are somehow dragged towards the threshold of victimizing our self or feel the palpation of crepitating heartbeat each time we think about the inexplicable and insurmountable circumstance of rape.

Today child sexual abuse is increasing rather than the adult sexual abuse because they (the rapists) have realized the physical strengths and combating reinforcements in minors' are relatively lesser than the adult women. Therefore taking advantage of the juveniles they are mercilessly raped. Some accusers weave the lineage of maternal or sometimes paternal progeny's. Human (biased to the gender) race are yet to be blessed with sanity. In few parts of the country the younger female children who are poor, vanishes every once in a while and movies like slum dog millionaire make us aware about the extreme poverty in the country. Thus flesh trade is the only option left for the people of such locations irrelevant to age. Schooling is out of the priority for them.

For the better understanding C.R.Y (Child Rights and You) has come up with few reasons for child abuse.

A number of children go missing every year – some are sold by their families, some are kidnapped, others lured by the promise of a better life both for themselves and their kin. According to CRY (Child Rights and You)

8,945 children go missing in India every year,

500,000 children are estimated to be forced into the sex trade every year.

Approximately 2 million child commercial sex workers are between the ages of 5 and 15 years.

Approximately 3.3 million child commercial sex workers are between 15 and 18 years.

Children consist 40% of the total population of commercial sex workers.

80% of these children are found in the five metros – Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore.

71% of them are illiterate.

Our biggest and our own metropolitan cities have become the hub of child and women abuse. Schools, institutions, places with children, female labourers and even their own houses and rooms have become places of threat and trepidation. How to shield the girls? Every parent has that worry. Delhi was always the Rape capital, and Bangalore? How big is the child of six years? Probably some kids do not even attain the stage of puberty, before understanding the biological concept of menstrual cycle they have to undergo the treatment for their vaginal recovery.

How shameful is Vibgyor International School now?

India is deteriorating in sanity and civilization. Fathers, brothers and husbands are forgetting their relationship for cheap gratification. The gender violence should be stopped and a noose around the rapist's neck is what we should see because a lifetime imprisonment is too dramatic. If we can't prevent rape we can least punish the rapists.

# books



**Soldati Gorkha  
Molto Buone**  
by Samsher Ali  
Upama Publications, 300.00

by Ashif

Soldati Gorkha Molto Buone speaks of many things- of love, war, of social and political lives, of adventure, of hope and freedom. Soldati Gorkha Molto Buone is not written for the world or the nation or the state but for us, It speaks of our stories, our lives, our struggle and our dreams. It brings to light the fierce urgency of now in understanding that we are all stuck on the same boat and unless we do something we will be stuck here a long time. If the Hill Folks ever wanted to know what it must have been like being us from one generation to the next then Soldata Gorkha Molto Boune is the book for you. It follows no ism in its writings. It is written in a language that we speak everyday. For what is it to write for the oppressed? To write for the grassroots, one must be that grass first. One must suffer the pain of being plucked, cut, dug and stamped. Slow is the process of evolution, the grass with time mixes with the soil and over generations it evolves into a plant or a tree. Soldati Gorkha Molto Buone tries to trace our journey from grasses to beautiful trees and plants in the hills. The stories are dedicated to each family

who holds dear to them the memories and courage of those who sacrificed their lives, hoping that from their failure we would learn something. Each story is a tribute to the downtrodden living in the forgotten corners of the region. The old 60s call us back again, cant go back in time though, just got to get things going the way it should be. Hitherto we recommended you to read Soldata Gorkha Molto Boune 'old Deluze/Gutarri style'. \*\*\*Read it as if you are listening to a record. When you buy an album/record there are always cuts that leave you cold. You can skip the track. You don't approach an album/record as a closed book that you have to take or leave. Other tracks you may listen to over and over again. They follow you. You find yourself humming them under your breath as you go about your daily business. It is to pry open the vacant spaces that would enable you to build your and of the people around you into a plateau of intensity that would leave after images of its dynamism that would be reinjected into still other lives, creating a fabric, of connecting routes would exist. The question is not : is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body? The answer to some readers, perhaps most, will be "none". If that happens, it's not your tune. No problem. But you would have been better off buying a record.\*\*\*\*.



**Mummy no need to cook meat from tomorrow. We get boiled earthworms with our meals in school...**

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# poems

Dinita Rai

## You And me

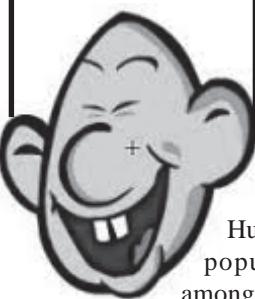
Life – a mirage

I remember you,  
When I see the blue sky.  
‘Cause It resembles your love for me,  
But I also see the clouds of doubt,  
Which keeps you away from me.

I free your touch  
When rose petals touch me  
‘Cause your touch is so smooth.  
But I also feel the thorn of frustration  
Which makes our relation so poignant.

I see your light  
When I see the lamp,  
‘Cause your light has brightened up my life.  
But I also see the dark spot of sadness behind  
Which also makes up my life..





Hum Jayega', is a popular name among the youths of Eastern Nepal, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Sikkim, Assam and Manipur. Literally, 'Hum Jayega' means 'I will go'. 'Hum Jayega' is a character widely used in the jokes and humorous pieces in the above mentioned areas. 'Hum Jayega' is so popular that every person has heard at least one joke/piece of him. Some of the youngsters have memorized numerous jokes of 'Hum Jayega' and regaling friends with jokes and stories of 'Hum Jayega' has been a favourite pastime for many youths.

So who is Hum Jayega really? Is he just a fictional character or did he really exist? Most of the people are ignorant regarding these questions. Even the youngsters who have memorized numerous jokes of Hum Jayega don't know the reality. Due to this many rumors have been spread about him. One of the objective of this article is to inform you with the true story of Hum Jayega.

Although, Hum Jayega is thought as the fictional character by most, he is in fact the person named Dal Bahadur Gurung who was born in the Chungthung tea garden of Darjeeling, a state of India on 1921 AD. His ancestors were from the place called Makluwa of Panchthar district of Nepal. Hum Jayega's great grandfather Dhaujbeer Gurung migrated along with his family in 1814 A.D. from his native land and settled in Darjeeling. 'Hum Jayega' was the son of Man Bahadur Gurung.

Hum Jayega was from a poor family. Due to this, he wasn't able to continue his studies further from third grade. Frustrated from being unable to continue his studies, Hum Jayega then ran away to Calcutta. It was 1936 A.D. and Hum Jayega was just 15 yrs. old. He

# HUM JAYAGA THE KING OF LAUGHTER

(Collected and Compiled by: Surath Giri)

had to face various troubles and hurdles in his journey. Lost in the crowds and alleys of Calcutta, Hum Jayega was rescued by a saint named Prabuddhanda who took Hum Jayega to the place called Bhawanipur and consigned Hum Jayega to his uncle's care.

It was the time of second world war and every unemployed was seeking their career as a British Soldier. Camps had been setup for recruiting the soldiers. Hum Jayega also reached one of the camp seeking job opportunity but was rejected because he could not reply in English to the British officials. Hum Jayega was frustrated and bereft of hope but then with the help of the British, he admitted himself in the Baligunj Engineering College and studied there for a year. Then, he was recruited in the army.

It was in the army where Hum Jayega learned to drive. Whenever the English officers had to go on a long journey, they would ask- "Who wants to go?". At this, Hum Jayega would reply, "Hum Jayega (I will go)." Later Hum Jayega became his nickname.

In 1948, at the age of 27, Hum Jayega returned to Darjeeling. He couldn't find any alternative employment opportunity. So, Hum Jayega became a cab driver at the club side Motor stand. In this new circle of friends he was known by his nickname Hum Jayega.

One day, an English couple wanted to go to Tiger Hill, which was then known for its difficult topography. Since the roads to Tiger Hill were under construction, the journey to Tiger Hill was risky and hazardous. And due to this, no cab driver was ready to take the English couple to the Tiger Hill. Hum Jayega, being a new driver didn't know much about the risk of the journey. So, he impulsively said, "Hum Jayega" ("I will go"). Hum Jayega's friends believed that Hum Jayega wouldn't return alive from Tiger Hill but to their dismay, Hum Jayega not only returned safe but also became the first man ever to take a vehicle to the summit of Tiger Hill.

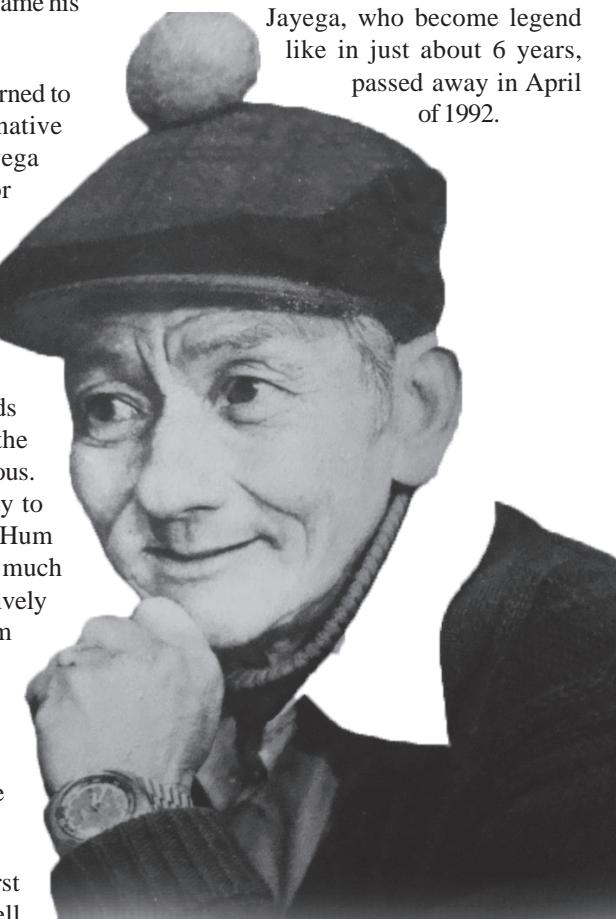
Not only this but Hum Jayega was the first person to take a vehicle to Tumling as well.

At around 1953, Hum Jayega drove his passenger to Tumling. Because of these deeds Hum Jayega gained popularity. His jokes (some told by himself and some with his name) added to his popularity.

From 1984 Hum Jayega started acting in humorous plays, satires and farces. By the help of these, he criticized the negative aspect and events of the society in a humorous way. He was a master at his act. Yet, he has published nothing except his jokes collections.

Father of seven daughters and three sons, Hum Jayega or Dal Bahadur Gurung had a vice, i.e. he drank excessively. He was aware of it but was unable to improve himself.

Hum Jayega lost all his wealth due to his drinking habit. So, the family was compelled to live in poverty. But the misery was never able to estrange Hum Jayega from laughing and making others laugh. Hum Jayega, who became legend like in just about 6 years, passed away in April of 1992.



# RECALLING KALIMPONG

## LEPCHA MAD



Dr. Sonam B. Wangyel

**O**f the many people the Lepchas honour few can match the reverence that Lieutenant General George Byres Mainwaring (proper pronunciation Mannering) commands. This veneration becomes all the more significant since Mainwaring was not a Lepcha and belonged to an aristocratic family of Cavenagh-Mainwaring from Whitmore and Budduph in Staffordshire. He was born in India on 18 July 1825 while his father was serving in the Bengal Civil Service. From his father George Mainwaring he received his first name, George, and from his mother, Isabella Byres, his middle name Byres. As it was the convention with people possessing money and status the boy Mainwaring was packed off to 'home', in his case home being Aberdeen, Scotland, to complete his studies and from Aberdeen it was to Wimbledon for higher learning in classics and mathematics. In the confines of the British institutions little did the young lad know that one day he would be a champion amongst the Lepchas and that he would be reverentially recalled by this community even well beyond a hundred years of his death.

At a tender age of seventeen he was commissioned into the 16th Bengal Native Infantry and on 8 January 1842 he sailed for India. His first few years in India must have made a man out of him for he had hardly acclimatized and oriented himself with the sub-continent when he was inducted into the business of a professional soldier in the Battle of Mahaharajpur. Young Mainwaring did not do too badly and he was awarded the Gwalior Campaign Bronze Star in 1843. After a short break he was back again in action in the First Sikh War of 1845-46. He saw action in Moodki, Ferozashapur and Sobraon and in these battles he accredited himself fairly for which he received the Sutlej Campaign Medal (1845-46) being cited for the Battles of Ferozashapur and Sobraon.

From 1846 to 1854 there is visible blank in his career records and it can be presumed that the period of peace and lull was utilized by the soldier in learning something more refined than firing guns and cannons. He probably became interested in Indian languages and the period was used in studying Hindustani and Urdu. Anyway, by 1854 he had been in service for twelve years in India and he left for England to sort out personal matters that had been unattended during the long absence from home. He returned to India after three years when the country was heavily under the cloud of Indian Sepoy Mutiny/First War of Independence. He had sufficient knowledge of Hindustani and Urdu and because of that proficiency he was immediately posted to Kanpur as an interpreter with the 42nd and 49th Highlanders. Then after several uneventful years, a trip home for medical causes, and a short stint in Punjab he received orders that would cut profound and permanent impression on him: he was ordered to Darjeeling to study the Lepcha language and compile a grammar and a dictionary.

Between the end of 1867 and the beginning of 1868 he arrived in Darjeeling and began his career as a student of the Lepcha grammar and compiler of the first Lepcha dictionary. The bustling town of Darjeeling had very few Lepcha speakers for by 1868 the Lepchas were a relatively marginalized society with a few living in the fringes of the town and the majority being located in far flung areas. It is recorded that Mainwaring lived with the Lepchas in Lebong area and then moved on to a village called Polungdong. It is difficult to trace this place in the old maps of Darjeeling but the District Records of 1841-79 records that Phulungdung was the Roman transliteration from Tibetan of Fullaloon (Phalilung / Phulung), today's Phalut, and so it appears that Mainwaring chose this very remote and inhospitable area for his second phase of his work. The choice was probably influenced by the presence of a Lepcha priestess, Mun, who was an authority in the language and maybe also because he would be able to pursue his studies undisturbed in this isolated area.

In 1876 "A Grammar of the Rong (Lepcha) Language" was published and although missionaries like Rev. Start and Rev. Niebel had tried to compile a grammar way back in the 1840s this became the first comprehensive work to see print. The grammar being published he could now concentrate on the dictionary and today even a non-Lepcha reader will be amazed to read the fine details in the dictionary. It will be very safe to claim that despite the development and popularity of the Nepali language it is impossible to find a Nepali dictionary that compares favourably to Mainwaring's Lepcha dictionary, with a possible exception of Turner's "A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language". Unfortunately, Mainwaring died before he could publish the dictionary and his unpublished work was taken to Germany by one of his colleagues and was finally published in Berlin in 1898 under the supervision of Dr. Albert Grunwedel, a Tibetologist.

It appears that Mainwaring was mad for the right reasons and as long as the Lepcha people stay true to their language and culture he will be remembered reverentially for this unique madness.



Gorkha Soldiers in Tibet as part of the Younghusband Expedition in 1904

# Happy Independence Day

“ Freedom is never dear at any price.  
It is the breath of life.  
What would a man not pay for living? ”

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

